

Senator Houck Reports from Richmond
Week of February 6, 2006

This week's report is devoted to several budget amendments I submitted to the Senate Finance Committee for its consideration. My focus has been on projects and issues impacting the citizens of the 17th District. These budget items include the following:

- **Dangerous Dog Register:** Funds have been requested to carry out the provisions of legislation dealing with dangerous dogs (Senate Bill 200). The bill would require the use of a dangerous dog registry to keep track of dogs deemed unsafe. Funds for the dangerous dog registry also would include a full-time position at the Office of the State Veterinarian to perform the duties required by Senate Bill 200.
- **Uninsured Medical Catastrophe Fund:** It would pay for the medical treatment of uninsured patients facing a major medical emergency. Money can be given to uninsured individuals facing a life-threatening injury, hospitalization, or specialized medical treatment.
- **Grants for Teachers Seeking National Board Certification:** Funds have been requested for an incentive grant to be available for teachers seeking certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. With these dollars, it is expected by 2007 that over 950 teachers will hold National Board Certifications.
- **Virginia Council on Economic Education:** This organization provides training, teaching materials, and curriculum to K-12 teachers on economic issues that are part of the required Standards of Learning program. Funds would support the efforts of the Council, which is located at Virginia Commonwealth University.
- **Implementation of the 2-1-1 Information System:** The 2-1-1 Information System is a nationwide phone number that provides information about health and human services and provides referrals to health care services. This system will be implemented this year, and funds will allow a launch and expansion of this service to 24 hours a day/7 days a week.
- **Commonwealth Staffing Initiative:** This request for funding will go towards providing 18 field specialists and 20 extension agencies in extension and research centers across the Commonwealth.
- **At-Risk Students:** This amendment restores funding from the 2002 budget reductions. This program providing funding for programs such as drop out prevention and truancy.
- **Virginia Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom:** The goal of the program is to provide students with a basic knowledge of agriculture so that they will have an understanding of its importance and its impact on our community.
- **Non-State Agencies:** I am pleased to request funding for the following local organizations:

- \$50,000 for the Elwood House and Friends of the Wilderness Battlefield
- \$100,000 for the James Madison Museum
- \$100,000 for the Louisa Arts Center
- \$100,000 for the Museum of Culpeper History

As always, I seek your input on these items and other issues throughout the General Assembly Session. Please do not hesitate to contact my office with any questions or comments. I can be reached via telephone at (804) 698-7517 or via e-mail at district17@sov.state.va.us.